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ABSTRACT

In a controlled experiment, the IIEP attempted to develop efficient teaching materials in the field of educational planning. Informal instructional materials were compiled from the tape recordings, transcriptions, and summary notes of seminars, lectures, and discussions conducted by the IIEP in its training and research program. This instructional unit discusses some of the general policies and problems in educational planning from the standpoint of UNESCO officials, and explains how these policies affect the approach to and the practice of planning. Related documents are EA 003 931-933, and EA 003 935-942. (RA)

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The Fundamentals of Educational Planning : Lecture - Discussion Series

No. 10 POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

by R. Diez-Hochleitner

EA 003 934

Unesco : International Institute for Educational Planning

Introduction

It gives me particular pleasure to discuss with you some of the problems which are at the very root of our educational planning work in Unesco. Planning is the instrument of modern administration in every field, and educational planning is certainly the major instrument of dynamic educational administration. Educational planners are concerned with both 'methodology' and 'policies'. If I may summarize it this way - a plan may be drawn up by a man familiar with the tricks, the techniques, who knows how to prepare a plan and help the administration in implementing and evaluating the plan; and, later, who knows how to replan, and prepare a second plan. All this is most important. But educational policies are at least equally important. These may be realized through the implementation of a strategy conforming to the realities of each country and of each case - a strategy subject to the particular limitations. In order to realize policy it is necessary to work out a plan for its achievement over a given period of time and with indication of the resources available.

I propose to discuss mainly the policies and problems as Unesco sees them at present. I shall refer to some of the policies which are being developed and to some of the challenges in educational policies which we are trying to tackle at the present time. I shall consider how these policies and challenges have affected our approach to and practice of planning.

The work of Unesco in this field is mainly devoted to giving advice to Member States and to helping maintain training and research facilities. The principal task of the Department of Planning and Financing of Education in helping advise the Member States is carried out through the use of experts. These experts give counsel on policies which should be heeded in planning by Member States, and they also advise on the implementation of plans.

Unity of educational policy

The first point I want to make is that, in principle, educational policies are or should be the same for every country. We cannot fix a time at which they will in fact all be the same, but in the long run they should basically be the same. So, the goal is a unity of educational policies. Such a trend towards a degree of unity is largely consubstantial with and the result of intellectual co-operation.

This unity is made possible, and its effect is greatly increased, because of the rôle which mass media now play in our daily life and in the societies to which we belong. The diffusion of ideas and of information through the vast complex of media which influence our thinking helps towards this unity.

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This basic principle of unity is not in contradiction with the idea of diversity. Of course, there is and will be diversity. Each country with its different level of development, its different specific situation, its special characteristics, must adopt its policies to its own social, economic, political and cultural characteristics. Diversity comes, mainly, as we see it at present, from levels of development; and therefore we prefer to talk about strategies, in the implementation of a basic educational policy. We believe that the question of strategy in carrying out a basic educational policy will be one of the major considerations to be discussed at the 1968 International Conference on educational planning which has been provided for in the programme adopted by the General Conference of Unesco which recently took place.

Therefore, our point of departure is the premise that developing countries and developed countries should aim in the long run at the achievement of the same policies. Individual situations and the ways and means to resolve them being different, each country needs a different strategy to realize these basic policies. In fact certain qualifications are necessary for the adaptation of basic policies to individual country characteristics.

If this is clear, then I wish to move to consideration of some of the policies which are involved in this general expression of basic common educational policies. I divide consideration of these into three categories: 1) general educational policies; 2) educational policies by area; and 3) educational policies by level of education.

General educational policies

The question of general educational policies goes to the base of the work of Unesco. If you read the Constitution of Unesco you will see that Unesco's existence is justified mainly in terms of its contribution to peace. When you examine what this means, or how this aim is to be achieved you must immediately consider the problems, the policies, and the programmes of international understanding and international co-operation which are involved in achieving peace. This is probably the best example of the hypothesis, or thesis concerning the principle of basic unity in educational policies. At least it may be said that Unesco Member States who have endorsed the Constitution, who are endeavouring to speak the same language in this respect, would not be in disagreement with the fact that every country, every Member State, developed or developing, whatever its situation, or whatever the means which it has at its disposal, should have as one of its major educational policies, programmes for contributing to international understanding and international co-operation, and through these and other means, to peace. This is an aspect of international ethics or morality which nobody should challenge.

Among general policies are others of relatively less importance in terms of values, yet no less important in terms of the requirements for planning. I would mention, for example, the movement now gaining strength for the expansion and improvement of education for women; this should be taken into account in every educational plan. Similarly, the education of youth and of children - the latter being of particular interest, for example, to one of the sister organizations of Unesco, namely UNICEF.

Educational policies by area

Among the educational policies by area I wanted to highlight to you, I would mention four of particular importance. First is the entire concern with the expansion of education. Actually, if you study developments in education at the level of international action you will see that most programmes have started from the idea of expansion, viewed simply as the need for greater quantity. Why? Because there is such a pressing need for more education. A valid proposition, a major issue in educational policies is this: when you face a planning exercise, one of the major issues you have to face is to what extent you will support an expansion policy of education. But, in this field thinking has evolved, beyond that of the days when expansion was proposed or supported without qualification. Now, educational policy-makers talk in terms of balanced expansion, a balanced approach in expansion.

If I may summarize it, this balanced approach means that the educational process must be looked upon as a whole. One cannot indulge in the luxury of expanding a given level or aspect of education without considering its effects, the pressure it puts on the other levels, or the restrictions and limitations it imposes on the rest of the process. The whole must be taken into account. The responsibility of the planners, the policy-makers, is not limited to a given aspect of education.

The policy of balanced approach for expansion has, however, another element, which can be called output. This refers to school-leavers as against, for example, drop-outs and repeaters who stay more than one year in the same grade.

In this respect, the thinking of educational planners - or administrators and policy-makers - has fortunately advanced very much in the last five years and the balanced approach is becoming world-wide.

A second educational policy to be highlighted is the improvement of quality. "Quality" of education is a very vague concept. To be really meaningful it has to be approached as being qualitative improvement of education, interlocked with quantitative expansion of education. In any

case, one has to define it in more specific terms such as teachers' standards and the training of teachers; the content of education, which is a major preoccupation right now among policy-makers - what is to be taught (curriculum aspects); and in terms of media and methods of teaching, including new ones. As for content and its impact on educational plans, the present trend of thinking of policy-makers shows an emphasis on science teaching and another emphasis, coming more and more to light, on languages. I saw recently a most impressive article which makes the point (which can be challenged, no doubt) that curriculum in the future can and should turn around two major aspects, language (national language) plus mathematics. This is the extreme interpretation of the trends in this field - the emphasizing of those two aspects - but it is at the root of the idea of expanding general education as a means of preparing the basis for technical education, reducing in that way the length of technical education and restructuring the whole educational system.

On this aspect of quality I mentioned new media. The IIEP has prepared a major work on the subject - on radio and television for education, with analyses of experiences. If this research, and the future follow-up of it, can finally provide educational planners with clear answers about the pedagogical efficiency and the cost aspects of the new media, there is no doubt that it will help reshape educational policies and practices very fundamentally with much impact on quality, not only the quality of the teaching but also the administration of the whole educational sector.

A third highlight area is life-long education - which is derived from the idea that the educational process is a continuous process. This idea has been limited previously to the formal school and university system, but now every educational planner will have to face (our experts in the field already have) the question of continuing education beyond and outside the school system. That includes adult education and other special courses. Such things must be planned. For example, various training courses being organized in many countries, the use of television in a systematic planned manner to spread and update knowledge. Though this policy is being more clearly outlined and thought about, the ways and means to implement it are far from being well developed and known about and the problems involved are far from being solved.

A fourth policy area which both educators and economists must be concerned with, is the integration of education into development. One main aspect here is manpower and employment. Others include the question of finance, of the machinery for administration and of the joint planning for both education and over-all development.

In connexion with these problems, two aspects need to be referred to: first, the economics of education. Many good books have been written about the economics of education but still very little is known, if anything, because of the great difficulty in determining the productivity returns yielded by education. But in recent years very important developments in the field of financing of education have taken place. The problem is solved in a very pragmatic way. Financial institutions - and I refer here particularly to the World Bank - which have to use the language of economists and make sure of a return on every investment, have decided to invest in education without any real evidence of the returns. They have approached the problem by saying: "We cannot make investments for development unless we have the manpower necessary to operate the industries, the agricultural development projects, etc. for which we are prepared to make finance available." From that very moment when education was recognized as an indispensable factor to make valid those capital investments, the problem of the economics of education became really "academic". No doubt it is interesting to continue research in this field - particularly if we can show in the future how high these returns are. But the fact is that for policy-makers, right now, in terms of allocations for education and the like, it is of secondary importance.

More important, I think, for the future is the whole aspect of the relation of education and society. In the social aspects of the inter-relationship, in the policy of need for integrating education in the social forces, education is probably the most important factor, and certainly the most important factor of social mobility and change. Whenever I speak of educational planning or development, I like to refer to the words of the Secretary General of the United Nations - I think he was quite right when he emphasized the fact that development is certainly growth plus change, growth alone is not development. What produces social change? What can positively influence change so much as education? However, only to the extent that we know the impact of education in effecting change can we make adequate use of education for that purpose. Too little is known, too little research has been done on this aspect. People may resist the idea that one has to plan social change, but this is certainly one of the major avenues for research and for action which so far has been under study only in terms of human resources for development. What about development for society and development to benefit individuals?

Educational policies by level

Finally, I would highlight a few policy aspects as I see them, by level of education.

On primary education, I wish to refer simply to a question that bothers my colleagues and certainly every conference of ministers - what is the minimum required for primary education? With regard to Latin America, in the time of an undefined expansion policy, the governments at a conference in Montevideo in 1953 concluded that the best formula would be to have a three-year primary school education. The results of this, as the Latin Americans know very well, were most unfortunate. This was probably due in part to the fact that the three years' schooling was of the old type, without any effort to improve quality, or to look into content and school age. But no one in Latin America now speaks of anything less than six years' minimum primary education. In Asia, the various ministers in conference have been talking of a minimum of seven years - which some countries have already achieved. It makes no sense pedagogically, or from the economic point of view, to have less than five or six years, or maybe seven, to obtain the desirable results of a literate person, an educated youngster who can continue in the educational process without too great a risk of becoming a functional illiterate.

There is one major fact presently recognized: universal, free primary education is a long-term policy. It is a policy which should be valid for every country in the world, but you cannot fix the same date for all.

In primary education you have to face many issues. The business of rural and urban primary education is one of the major problems of many countries and particularly, at present, of African countries. It has been said that, in principle, there should be no difference between the rural and the urban planned education. But should the curriculum of schools in rural and urban areas be adapted to one particular condition?

This is a very important question. Many countries have had, and some still have, a different shading of schools, which in some cases represents a discrimination - certainly not intended - towards the rural areas.

Years ago it was a policy issue - now largely resolved - to what extent primary education should be vocational in content? The idea of eliminating vocational training from primary schools was accepted at a very early stage, but some policy-makers, or administrators of education in several countries, still feel that primary schools should be a pre-vocational education. Present trends indicate that it is also wrong to accept that idea.

This leads me to secondary education and policies in this field. The trend here is also emerging clearly - to continue the general education initiated in primary education, at least during the first three to four years, which in several countries is now called the first cycle. I think this is

certainly one of the major educational policies, which will influence planning exercises all over the world. Secondary general education is becoming more and more a continuation of primary education, and replaces the old-fashioned approach of a post-primary vocational education.

This is a world-wide trend. One cannot, however, support the idea of introducing this change totally in every country whatever the stage of development is. This idea of expanding the general education through first-cycle secondary education is to be linked necessarily with the new approach to the content of education. In this connection, a greater place is to be given to science teaching.

The vocational education, or diversification of secondary education, coming at the second cycle also needs to be clarified. Educational policies have often confused agricultural and industrial education as being the same problem, both being vocational and therefore the tendency has been to give the same answers for both types of education. Experts and policy-makers now agree more and more that this is wrong. Besides matters of content and approach, in agricultural education the training of the top cadres at the university level must be emphasized as well as that of extension workers for action in the rural areas. Secondary schools for agriculture, however, have been necessary as a good emergency solution. In this connexion also, one word about what is becoming more and more of a trend - the establishment of comprehensive schools - for example, the United States' formula of a comprehensive school which is being adopted increasingly in Europe, and the lessons being drawn from the polytechnicums in the USSR.

As for higher education, I wish to highlight two aspects. First, many policy-makers agree that in the long run, and at present if possible, universities should have a leading rôle in policy formulation for the educational system. Universities should be the brain, the motor in the educational systems. But unfortunately the realities in many countries are that universities, if not maintaining isolation, are not responding to the development needs of countries. In many cases, I think this is largely due to protecting themselves in a wrong conception of the autonomy of those universities. It is also possible that universities have not been given the means, and have not been invited to take a leading rôle in development programmes.

This brings me to the second aspect: teacher training. An educational planner should think that teacher training, particularly for secondary level, should be supplied by universities, but too often institutions for teacher training for secondary level must be established outside universities. The universities are not equipped, or not willing, to contribute to this major need.

As to universities themselves, there are two major trends. One is "institutional development", the idea of planning higher education in an integrated way. The other is the introduction of departments to serve horizontally the several faculties of a university.

Finally, one word on adult education. Much is heard about this great vague field. It covers extension work, and some countries call it cultural extension. Adult education for university post-graduates is mainly conducted by universities. In developing countries adult education is intended particularly for in-service training or training of adult illiterates or those with a low level of basic qualifications. The qualifications are, purely and simply, literacy.

In this field we all recognize many things that need to be done, the relative importance of adult education depends very much on the stage of development of the country. There is no doubt that educational policy-makers will have to give major attention in the next decade to the various issues involved.

From the present trends, I think that the main policy involved there is to recognize that a school system does not produce a professional but gives the basis for becoming a specialist. Only in-service training can produce a professional.

Another fact we must recognize is that there is a need for mobility between professions, and for retraining in order to achieve it. But retraining is not only valuable in changing professions. It may be needed in the very profession one has chosen because technological knowledge is expanding. Techniques valid ten years ago may not be valid now; and in the future, the rate of acceleration being greater, real retraining within a profession will be needed.

Comprehensive educational planning

A concluding word on educational planning. Educational planning is involved in all the aspects of education I have discussed. It is at the service of educational policies and often affects them as a result of the planning process.

Let us briefly review the history of educational planning during, say, the last ten years. At the Lima conference of ministers of education, the very first international recommendation on educational planning was made.

This definition of educational planning referred to integral or integrated planning, to be related to general development, for all levels and aspects of education, to include school and out of school education. It referred to planning being concerned with economic, social; political and cultural factors. Educational planning was to be concerned with the administration, with expansion and improvement of education, i.e. quantity and quality.

Ten years have elapsed since those days. During these last ten years we have been facing a number of pressures from sectors and people seemingly discovering new aspects or calling them to the attention of educational planners.

I remember very well, for example, the days when Professor Fred Harbison started emphasizing manpower. In principle he was right to stress this aspect, although educational planning risked becoming distorted by manpower specialists rushing onto the scene. Later on, at a given point, another group of people pushed the economics approach in educational planning. So, for many, planning became a kind of economics of education. Then Unesco itself emphasized the whole idea of adult education and adult literacy, showing that educational planners had based their plans too often on the school system alone.

Then it was discovered that women's education was not being given enough attention, and so educational planners were put to look after the promotion of women.

UNICEF then underlined the need to plan the education of children, though educational planners think in demographic terms of the whole population, and felt we had maybe failed to take care of children. Then the ministers' meetings in Buenos Aires, Bangkok and Tripoli insisted that careful planning must be well integrated, so the stress became on integration with development plans.

The importance of introducing new techniques and teaching methods in educational plans has also been persistently underlined in recent years. At a time when educational development plans were giving particular attention to aspects related to the quantitative expansion of education, attention was called to the pre-eminence of qualitative improvement teacher training and content of education. More recently, we have been trying to evaluate critically all educational planning done so far, in terms of plan implementation, i.e. educational administration, etc. etc.

I have referred myself to all the above examples to show the complexity and enormity of the task, and the pressure under which educational planners work, not to mention waves of subjects in vogue, or which become

real priorities. Therefore, an educational planner should be informed about trends and policies in education, since he is someone who contributes to the formulation of educational policies, but is not necessarily, or cannot be certainly, the policy-maker of every aspect of education. An educational planner is the man who is in charge of the pipe-line for the policies to become reality in action. But he has to receive the answers, the information, the processes from the researchers, from the people who are dealing with the specific problems involved. I conclude by saying that educational planning is the business of everybody, thus we are the servants of everybody. Educational policies are the soul of educational planning, but do not let us be confused; educational planners are not the only, or the major, educational policy-makers.